

Medical Economics and Public Health

Continuation of the activities of the Sheppard-Towner law are dependent upon appropriations that must be made by this Congress.

Its advocates are having a hard time arousing interest among themselves, much less for the active lobbying that will be required to induce Congress to extend this innovation.

An active publicity proponent of this most criticized of all the fifty-fifty laws voices its discouragement in connection with a much advertised and heralded statewide conference held recently in Los Angeles of all that formerly had been interested in the Sheppard-Towner law. "The program," says this periodical, "was very enlightening but the attendance so small as to apparently justify the conclusion that there are no women in California interested in child welfare." Of course women, and men as well, are keenly interested in child welfare, but this interest need not be expressed through a political bureau of the Department of Labor at Washington.

A promising study is being carried out by Dr. V. H. Podstata and associates at THE ROSE AVENUE COTTAGES for the study and re-education of unusual children, at Pleasanton, California.

"Rose Avenue Cottages" was formerly a beautiful summer residence with attractive buildings, grounds and lawns. It has been converted into a promising personality service for those children from 6 to 12 years of age who belong to the group aptly termed "unusual" by Doctor Podstata.

Permanently subnormal children and those over 12 or under 6 are not accepted except temporarily for purposes of diagnosis.

"The 'unusual' child," says Doctor Podstata in his recently issued report, "is essentially a pre-psychotic or a pre-criminal child. In certain cases the psychosis is already in evidence when we receive the child. (So-called constitutional depressions, elations, shut-in personality, hysterical reactions, etc.) Also the varying mixture of traits and reactions that we term 'psychopathy' may be present. Fortunately, the time is past when all these deviations were discussed under the term 'degeneracy'."

"The majority of the children exhibit a sensitive nervous organization, failing to adjust themselves to difficult surroundings. A certain proportion of these cases show an insufficient capacity and plasticity of the nervous organization. Generally, however, the surroundings have been largely to blame."

"Our primary aim," continues the report, "naturally is the search for the cause or causes of the existing deviation. To systematize this search we assume that these may be found upon one or more of the following levels:

"1. The developmental, largely the lack of potential vitality imparted to the uniting parental cells.

"2. The structural, meaning the development, organization, and structural integrity of nerve tissue impaired by trauma or disease.

"3. The toxic, endogenous or exogenous, producing little if any structural change, but interfering with normal functions of the nervous system.

"4. The endocrine, especially the thyroid, pituitary and gonad, which primarily, or as a result of other impairments (toxic, emotional, etc.), cause certain deviation in normal capacity of response of nerve tissue.

"5. The psychic, dividing these into:

(a) Largely environmental, with reality too difficult for adjustment (faulty home and school atmosphere and influence, etc.).

(b) Largely personal, meaning abnormal basic tone of feeling, undigested experiences, actual mental traumas, conflicts and problems.

"Even the small group of cases covered in the report has demonstrated the need of this large scope of enquiry. It has been shown, however, that no matter how large a part is played by the 'physical' elements, there never fail to appear mental reactions based upon, or, better stated, compensating for such an impairment. In other words, always the individual reacts as a whole.

"Of necessity the treatment at Rose Avenue Cottages covers more than one level of impairment, but in no case can the large mental element be ignored.

"Every care is taken to create true family atmosphere and to avoid institutional routine. The very success of this effort emphasizes the need of limitation of the number of children who are accepted for care.

"With the exception of two boys (fourteen and fifteen years old), every child admitted to Rose Avenue Cottages has been benefited, some of them remarkably so. The

two exceptions sustain the decision not to accept children over 12 years of age. The success attained with children declared impossible (with one exception) both at home and in school is very encouraging. The stealing, running away and other serious problems, in most cases, disappeared soon after admission.

"Rose Avenue Cottages has not the finances sufficient to warrant extending its services to those who cannot pay something. On the other hand, there is no intention of converting the cottages into a profit-bearing institution."

Under the same able medical management that conducts the nearby Livermore Sanitarium, scientific reports of value may be anticipated and methods of intelligent service to an important group of children may be established.

The poor man of "middle age": One prominent and widely quoted writer recently emphasized the point that the reason Ponce de Leon did not find the fountain of youth was that he started his search too late in life. That is said to have been the principal cause of failure of others searching for youth's fountains.

There seems to be some disagreement among "savants" as to the exact age when one must go looking for that Pierian spring. Most of them agree that old age is too late. Some say that "middle life" is about the right time, but others believe the search should start with adolescence.

A prominent physician has said that the best way he knew to fail in promoting or preserving health was to try to follow as much as possible of the "free medical advice" now being issued everywhere in every way by everybody except those prepared by education and experience to give medical advice.

Lewellys Barker says, get a hobby—get two hobbies—get the hobby of your choice and then ride. To which may be added—avoid the free health advice that pugilists, movie actresses, "savants" and other bubbling emotionalists who are so energetically dispensing froth for substance in health matters.

Health officers receive appointment: According to the Bulletin of California Board of Health, W. F. Mosher, M. D., and a member of the California Medical Association, has been appointed city health officer of Holtville to succeed Mr. Dale C. Cooper.

Harry F. Smith, M. D., has been appointed city health officer of Piedmont, to succeed Arthur Fibush, M. D. Both members of the California Medical Association.

Warren F. Fox, M. D., has been appointed city health officer of Pasadena to succeed Frank W. Hodgdon Jr., M. D., who has served in that capacity for many years. Doctor Fox's term of office began January 1, 1926. Doctor Hodgdon is a member of the California Medical Association.

"A new field is opening for the physician," relate speakers upon this subject (Virginia M. Monthly). "I venture to predict that in the future, all intelligent men and women will have their own health physician to whom they will look to keep them well and vigorous. This will not come until the public recognizes the fact that the physician can adequately give this service. To hasten the day and to insure its coming, we shall be wise to address ourselves to the task of becoming as efficient and successful in this field as in the field of prevention of communicable illness and the cure of disease." . . .

The American Optical Company has withdrawn their advertising support and co-operation through CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE with the physicians of California, Nevada and Utah because "intensive advertising in other fields will not permit" them to continue their former methods of appeal.

In answer to our members who have made enquiry regarding the reasons for this change of policy of the American Optical Company, we can only state the reason they gave in the above quotation, because that is all we have been supplied with.

Ennion G. Williams, M. D., Health Commissioner of Virginia, in discussing the reorganization of the Virginia Public Health Service, makes such commendable statements as:

"Public health authorities have kept before them the idea that the work must be carried on for the whole people, or the public, and not for individuals. The view-

point of the health officer, whose duty is to protect the public, is in marked contrast to that of the practitioner of medicine, whose duty is to the individual. It is also in marked contrast to the charity or welfare worker, who administers to the relief of the individual poor." . . .

"Public health duties include the education of the public as to a knowledge of the cause of diseases and methods to prevent them . . . the supervision of such utilities as water supplies and sewage disposal, and the abatement of nuisances dangerous to the public health. . . . Control of communicable diseases, including the collection of reports of cases, aid in diagnosis, epidemiological study of the cases and the institution of measures for control." . . .

"Other states make urinalyses and pathological examinations of tissues, but we have interpreted these examinations as not being within the legitimate boundary of public health activities." . . .

"There is a question as to the extent to which the government should go on looking after the physical condition of children. It can at least see that the environment is what it should be and furnish those that make the inspections, leaving the corrections to the parents or guardians. The correctional work should only be carried on by the government because of the inability of the parents to do so. In the use of the word government, I refer to national, state, or local."

Physical therapeutics is the new title of a magazine formerly issued by The Williams & Wilkins Company of Baltimore under the name of the American Journal of Electro-Therapeutics and Radiology.

"As one result of the desirability of periodic examination," says Boston M. & S. J. editorially, "numerous commercial 'clinics' and 'institutes' have sprung up, bearing with them the suggestion that it is only through such organizations that a thorough 'stocktaking' can be had, since it is beyond the ability of any one physician to carry out an examination which will detect any and all signs of incipient disease." . . . "The fundamental objection to the commercial clinics is that they operate to destroy the confidence between patient and physician which is essential if the former is to obtain the best kind of medical care." . . . "If periodic health examinations are to result in benefit to individuals, they must be made by one who individualizes, not by an organization that tends to mechanize the process. . . .

"If health clinics and commercial institutes are to justify their existence by serving the best interests of their members they must realize that this can be done only by co-operating with the family physician, not by endeavoring to supplant him. . . .

"If the family physician is not qualified the remedy lies not in superseding him, but in altering our system of medical education so that it shall give him these qualifications."

Dr. Harry Alderson recently forwarded us some mail that describes another cure-all for the inhabitants of the land of Moronia.

The device, which is said to be so helpful to doctors, appears to be a sort of automatic chiropractic thruster operated by electricity. The advertising is of the usual testimonial variety, the testimonials claiming to be from doctors of medicine as well as a variety of cultists.

Among other amazing claims is one said to be from a doctor indorsing the value of this percussion hammer on the seventh cervical vertebra in the treatment of aneurism.

A naturopath is quoted as saying that this up and down motion riveting hammer is particularly successful in eliciting the "spinal heart reflex of stimulation!" A chiropractor finds it "helpful in relaxing the spinal muscles before adjustments!!" A kinesipath, whatever that is, has used the hammer on "a case of fracture of the humerus with distinct benefit!!!"

"Dr. ——— Chiro." finds "it particularly valuable in treating female troubles." "Its penetrating powers are stimulating!!!"

"J. M. Ray, M.D." claims "marked success" with this device in treating "patients in Rockwood Old People's Home," etc., etc.

In their letter about this machine its promoters state:

"Because of the remarkable results obtained by its use in this way we have coined the phrase 'surge treatment,' and because of its resemblance to a wash machine in its method and effects, the to and fro action in the tissues cleanses them of the acid impurities and at the same time stimulates the local circulation, both of which as you know are essential to a healthy condition."

Disgusting you say. Of course, but do you know that this thing is manufactured in California, advertised through the mails and sold openly?

The Sutter Hospital of Sacramento is supplying interested friends with an attractive and useful annual report. They have departed from the old-time stereotyped method of report that was about as interesting reading as a census or weather bureau report. It is in narrative form, illustrated, and tells of growth and progress that reflects credit upon the management and ought to be a source of comfort and pride to the people of Sacramento.

The hospital gives mothers a parchment birth certificate bearing a drawing of the hospital and the certification of the birth of the baby signed by the attending physician and the superintendent and bearing the seal of the hospital. Over 500 such certificates were issued last year.

That is service that counts in the campaign to lower maternal hazards and infant mortality, made available to the people of Sacramento by the industry, leadership and teamwork of the doctors and their friends who financed and are conducting this splendid hospital exclusively as an ethical agency of scientific medicine.

The passing of Jacob Bausch is a matter of interest to physicians and all who use microscopes. Bausch died recently at his home in Rochester, New York, at the age of 95. He was president and founder of the Bausch & Lomb Optical Company:

"As a poor immigrant boy he borrowed \$60 from Henry Lomb and launched upon a business career which won him world-wide recognition. Lomb died in 1908."

"Some of our medical concepts may have to undergo revision," says Hugh S. Cumming (Virginia M. Monthly). "Even words may play an important role in popularizing periodic examinations for already we note a tendency to refer to the physician as 'health counsellor' and the patient as 'health client,'" relate speakers upon the subject.

We are still too much inclined to place disease and health in distinct categories, and yet how well we know that the line of demarcation is imperceptible. Our knowledge is scantiest where the two appear to merge and for that reason we may look for new light and significant facts as more and more people, presumably well, are brought under the scrutinizing eye of the physician trained to detect danger signals. A solemn scientific duty will rest upon the examining physician to keep accurate records, to note all of the facts in the clinical or pre-clinical picture.

For your convenience, C. H. Hittenberger Co., Surgical Appliances, have opened a branch store at 460 Post street, San Francisco, where you will find perfectly appointed and finely equipped rooms for privacy, where your patients will receive competent and courteous attention at all times. Their announcements are found monthly in our advertising pages.

Most people no doubt have forgotten the spectacular free advertising an osteopath received in the news columns a short time ago because of his alleged call to Spain to cure the defective hearing of Prince Don Jaime, son of the king.

The story was a plausible one to morons; it made the osteopath "famous" over night, and it gave him an opportunity to cash in on hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of free advertising. Investigators have later found that the prince is still deaf.

Nevertheless, a magazine of national circulation and a certain amount of prestige, smeared its pages with a salesmanship story that rivaled those of the average circulars and claims of goat gland vendors.

We don't know what has become of the osteopath. With so much free advertising he ought to have been able to clean up and retire. The most interesting feature

of the story is contained in the swan song issue of McClure's magazine which ceased publication with the February issue. In this last issue is a snarl at those who had criticized the accuracy, judgment and taste of the magazine in its previous exploitation of a man who claimed to cure deafness by "operative, constructive finger surgery."

Thus endeth another chapter.

California and Western Medicine (February, 1926, p. 241) quoted rather fully from the sordid story of the actions of a couple of itinerant quacks whose victims were people with "eye trouble."

These "specialists" were arrested and pleaded guilty. What happened may be inferred from the following letter from the Board of Medical Examiners to the District Attorney of Fresno County:

"This will acknowledge the communication sent us signed N. Evinger, clerk, relating that a plea of guilty was accepted from both Faircloth and Gebhardt, each thereafter having been fined \$600 and given six months suspended sentence.

"Considering the numerous complaints that have come to us throughout the State of California regarding similar operations of two individuals who have made a practice of swindling unsophisticated elderly people of means, it is too bad that an example was not made of Faircloth and Gebhardt and both sent to jail."

Signed: C. B. PINKHAM, Secretary.

Medical, Health and Health Agency News

The monthly meeting of the Staff of Hollywood Hospital was held in the assembly room on Tuesday, January 26. The meeting was well attended, there being about 120 members present. The subject for the evening was "Drainage in Infections of the Gall-bladder, Liver, Bile Ducts and Pancreas." A. S. Lobingier was the chief speaker, his talk being illustrated with lantern slides. George Dock led the discussion, followed by William Dashiell, C. F. Nelson, F. K. Collins, J. B. Williams, and H. G. Marxmiller.

San Diego County General Hospital's Medical Staff, writes Robert Pollock, have elected the following officers for 1926: President, C. E. Howard; vice-president, W. O. Weiskotten; secretary, Martha Welpton. The election followed at the close of a very excellent clinical program. It is rare that one is privileged to witness such generous discussion as was given the cases presented. The writer is firmly impressed with the belief that if those attending staff meetings and medical societies simply let themselves go and expressed as vigorously and pertinently their views on cases presented as they are apt to do after they leave the meeting, very much would be gained for the advance of medicine as a whole.

The Medical Staff of the Scripps Memorial Hospital recently elected the following officers for 1926: President, H. C. Oatman; vice-president, S. T. Gillispie; secretary-treasurer, A. B. Smith. This hospital has just closed its initial year of service to the public quite successfully, and promises to fill a much needed demand for a high class hospital to serve that section of the city.

The Children's Hospital, San Francisco, has decided to build within the year an additional wing costing some \$350,000, which will be devoted to maternity service and the development of a physiotherapy department as complete as is possible to plan.

The death of Dr. Virginia Milner, assistant resident at the hospital, occurred January 15, 1926. Doctor Milner sustained a slight superficial scratch on the back of the right hand a short time before the 29th of December, which was so trivial that she did not remember when or how it occurred. It apparently healed promptly, but was

further injured by scrubbing in the surgery on the 26th and on the 29th the tender spot was incised and treated surgically. There were soon all indications of a virulent infection which did not yield to treatment, and resulted in a virulent meningitis and a general septicaemia due to a hemolytic streptococcal infection from which she died seventeen days after the first recognition of the disease. Doctor Milner was a resident of Kentucky and a graduate of the Johns Hopkins University Medical School.

The monthly meeting of the Franklin Hospital Staff (as reported by George W. Becker, secretary) was held in the hospital on Monday, January 25, Irving S. Ingber presiding, after which the usual clinical meeting was held in the auditorium.

A large audience heard the papers, "Testicular Substance Implantations," by Leo L. Stanley, and a report of an "Interesting Case of Malaria," by J. Wilson Shields. Stanley gave a lengthy paper followed by lantern slides. His conclusions were the results of 1000 implantations of testicular substance, in 656 human subjects, including seven females. Striking improvements were noted in numerous cases of general asthenia, acne-vulgaris, and senility. Subjective or objective improvement was noted in rheumatism, neurasthenia, poor vision, and a few other diseases.

The operation is practically painless and harmless, and the technique as outlined by Stanley is very simple. He claims that the transplantation of the human testicular substance has a decided beneficial effect on the well-being of the patient. The implant does not live, but probably during the process of necrosis, certain substances are given off into the lymphatic, or blood stream, which stimulate the patient in some unknown way. The length of time which these beneficial effects last has not been definitely determined. It is possible that it lasts longer than a year. He does not claim that this procedure will increase longevity. This would be hard to establish, although he feels that anyone that enjoys good health and vigor and takes pleasure in living will outlive a patient with the opposite characteristics. As physical manifestations are a good indicator of one's state of health, he believes, judging from these as well as other indications, that beneficial effects may be produced by testicle transplantations. An interesting discussion followed, led by Hans Lissner and Victor G. Vecki.

J. Wilson Shields reported a case of malaria which had baffled diagnosis for some time, until finally the crescents were found in the blood smear, illustrating how very necessary and helpful the laboratory is in clinical diagnosis of obscure conditions.

The San Francisco Polyclinic Staff held a meeting on November 24, 1925. T. Victor Hammond read a paper on "Myxedema" with presentation of case, making his diagnosis on the history, symptoms, physical examination and the effect of thyroid therapy, going into the details of the characteristic skeletal pathology, which consists of achondroplasia due to defective development and premature atrophy of the ossifying cartilages and to premature calcification of the bones at the base of the skull, while the dome is disproportionately large and thick. For the same reason the stature is dwarfed, while the shafts of the long bones are thick and massive. Numerous autopsies have revealed a total absence of the thyroid gland or a considerable diminution in its size, also degenerative changes in its parenchyma. There is a thickening of the subcutaneous tissue and often fatty deposits in certain locations. The hypophysis cerebri is defective in many cases.

Myxedema was differentiated from three other classes of patients: (1) those presenting skeletal similarities—rickets, syphilis, hydrocephalus and achondroplasia; (2) those presenting edematous similarities—nephritis, heart conditions and scleroderma; (3) mental—mongolian idiocy—infantilism. If thyroid gland therapy is not continued throughout the lifetime of the patient the symptoms recur. Henry Harris discussed the paper and especially the spontaneous myxedema of adults, saying that the disease is not such a rare condition as is generally thought to be. Ernest K. Stratton discussed the skin manifestations of this disease. Sanford Blum discussed myxedema in general and the patient presented as previously treated by him.